THE
TWELVE
MONETHS
1626

THE TWELVE MONETHS AND CHRISTMAS DAY

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THE TWELVE MONETHS AND CHRISTMAS DAY FROM 'FANTASTICKES' BY NICHOLAS BRETON

New York · Clarke & Way · 1951

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NOTE

This book had its origin in a whim of mine to make an entire volume "with my own hands", as the private printer sometimes phrases it. To that end I borrowed from the Riverside Press some of their Riverside Caslon, which I had cut many years ago. With a type case, a galley and a stick I set the pages in the loft of my barn—an operation which lasted all summer. My intention was to print it on my 6 × 9 hand press, and I even contemplated making enough paper for three or four copies.

In the intervals of type-setting I had composed the decorations from Howard Trafton's calendar cuts in the pseudo-Greek style, together with a few other odd ornaments. Howard even drew for me a stylized peacock and a hound.

But by the time I had the book in type my ambition languished —and so did the pages.

Thus the project lay dormant until David J. Way urged me to let it be printed at The Thistle Press in New York—which has now been done, as you see.

The choice of Greek figures to illustrate a bit of XVII century English literature is of course an anachronism, but as we are the heirs of all the ages, in printing as in other arts, and the designs as composed do illustrate Nicholas Breton's "Moneths", I do not feel it necessary to apologize for the anomaly. B. R.

J A N U A R Y

IT IS NOW JANUARY, and Time beginnes to turne the wheele of his Revolution, the Woods begin to lose the beauty of their spreading boughes, and the proud Oke must stoop to the Axe: the Squirrell now surveyeth the Nut and the Maple, and the Hedgehogge rowles up himselfe like a football: an Apple and a Nutmeg make a Gossips cup: and the Ale and the Fagot are the Victuallers merchandise: the Northerne black Dust is the during Fuell, and the fruit of the Grape heats the stomake of the Aged: Downe beds and quilted Cappes are now in the pride of their service, and the Cooke and the Pantler are men of no meane office: the Oxe and the fat Weather now furnish the market,

and the Coney is so ferreted, that she cannot keepe in her borough: the Currier & the Lime-rod are the death of the fowle, and the Faulcons bels ring the death of the Mallard: the trotting gelding makes a way through the mire, and the Hare & the Hound put the Hunts-man to his horne: the barren Doe subscribes to the dish, and the smallest seed makes sauce to the greatest flesh: the dryed grasse is the horses ordinary, and the meale of the beanes makes him goe through with his travell: Fishermen now have a cold trade, and travel-ers a foule journey: the Cook room now is not the worst place in the Ship, and the Shepheard hath a bleake seat on the Mountaine: the Blackbird leaveth not a berry on the thorne, and the garden earth is turn-ed up for her roots: the water floods runne over the proud bankes, and the gaping Oister leaves his shell in the streets, while the proud Peacocke leaps into the pye: Muscovia commodities are now much in request, and the water Spaniell is a necessary servant: the Lode horse to the mill hath his full backe burthen; and the Thresher in the barne tryes the strength of his flayle: the Woodcocke and the Pheasant pay their lives for their feed, and the Hare after a course makes his hearse in a pye: the shoulder of a hog is a shooing horne to good drink, and a cold almes makes a begger shrug. To conclude, I hold it a time of little comfort, the rich mans charge, and the poore mans misery. Farewell.

FEBRUARY

IT IS NOW FEBRUARY, and the Sun is gotten up a Cocke-stride of his climbing, the Valleyes now are painted white, and the Brookes are full of water: the Frog goes to seeke out the Paddocke, and the Crow and the Rooke begin to mislike their old Makes: forward Connies begin now to kindle, & the fat grounds are not without Lambes: the Gardiner fals to sorting of his seeds, and the Husbandman falls afresh to scowring of his Ploughshare: the Terme travellers make the Shooe-makers Harvest, and the Chaundlers cheese makes the chalke walke apace: The Fishmonger sorts his ware against Lent: and a Lambe-skinne is good for a lame arme: the waters now alter the nature of their softnes,

and the soft earth is made stony hard: The Ayre is sharp and piercing, and the winds blow cold: the Tavernes and the Innes seldome lack Guests, & the Ostler knows how to gaine by his Hay: the hunting Horse is at the heeles of the Hound, while the ambling Nagge carrieth the Physitian and his footcloth: the blood of Youth begins to spring, & the honour of Art is gotten by Exercise: The trees a little begin to bud, and the sap begins to rise up out of the root: Physick now hath work among weake bodies, and the Apothecaries drugges are very gainfull: There is hope of a better time not farre off, for this in it selfe is little comfortable: and for the small pleasure that I find in it, I will thus briefly conclude of it: It is the poore mans pickpurse, and the misers cut-throat, the enemy to pleasure, and the time of patience.

Farewell.

MARCH

IT IS NOW MARCH, and the northerne wind dryeth up the Southerne durt: The tender Lippes are now maskt for feare of chopping, and the faire hands must not be ungloved: now riseth the Sunne a pretty step to his faire height, and Saint Valentine calls the birds together, where Nature is pleased in the varietie of love: the Fishes and the Frogs fall to their manner of generation, and the Adder dyes to bring forth her young: the Ayre is sharpe, but the Sunne is comfortable, and the day beginnes to lengthen: The forward Gardens give the fine Sallets, and a Nosegay of Violets is a present for a lady: Now beginneth Nature (as it were) to wake out of her sleepe, and sends the Traveller to survey the

walkes of the World: the sucking Rabbit is good for weake stomackes, and the dyet for the Rhume doth many a great Cure: The Farrier now is the horses Phy-sitian, and the fat Dog feeds the Faulcon in the Mew: The Tree begins to bud, and the grasse to peepe abroad, while the Thrush with the Black-bird make a charme in the young Springs: the Milk-mayd with her best be-loved, talke away wearinesse to the Market, and in an honest meaning, kind words doe no hurt: the Foot-bal now tryeth the legges of strength, and merry matches continue good fellowship: It is a time of much worke, and tedious to discourse of: but in all I find of it, I thus conclude in it: I hold it the Servant of Nature, and the Schoole-master of Art: the hope of labour, and the Subject of Reason.

Farewell.

APRIL

IT IS NOW APRIL, and the Nightingale begins to tune her throat against May: the Sunny showers perfume the aire, and the Bees begin to goe abroad for honey: the Dewe, as in Pearles, hangs upon the tops of the grasse, while the Turtles sit billing upon the little greene boughes: the Trowt beginnes to play in the Brookes, and the Sammon leaves the Sea, to play in the fresh waters: the Garden bankes are full of gay flowers, and the Thorne and the Plumme send forth their faire Blossomes; the March Colt begins to play, and the Cossett Lamb is learned to butt. The Poets now make their studies in the woods, & the Youth of the Country make ready for the Morris-dance: the little fishes lye nibling

at a bait, and the Porpas playes in the pride of the tide: the shepheards pipe entertaines the Princesse of Arcadia, and the healthfull Souldier hath a pleasant march. The Larke and the Lambe look up at the Sun, and the labourer is abroad by the dawning of the day: Sheepes eyes in Lambs heads tell kind hearts strange tales, while faith and troth make the true Lovers knot: the aged haires find a fresh life, and the youthfull cheeks are as red as a cherry: It were a world to set downe the worth of this moneth: But in summe, I thus conclude, I hold it the Heavens blessing, and the Earths comfort.

Farewell.

M A Y

IT IS NOW MAY, and the sweetnesse of the Aire refresheth every spirit: the sunny beames bring forth faire Blossomes, and the dripping Clouds water Floraes great garden: the male Deere puts out the Velvet head and the pagged Doe is neere her fawning: The Sparhawke now is drawne out of the mew, and the Fowler makes ready his whistle for the Quaile: the Larke sets morning watch, and the evening, the Nightingale: the Barges like Bowers keep the streams of the sweet Rivers, and the Mackrell with the Shad are taken prisoners in the Sea: the tall young Oke is cut downe for the Maypole: the Sithe and the Sickle are the Mowers fur-

niture and the fayre weather makes the Labourer merry: the Physitian now prescribes the cold Whey, and the Apothecary gathers the dew for a medicine: Butter and Sage make the wholsome breakfast, but fresh cheese and creame are meat for a dainty mouth: and the Strawbery & the Pescod want no price in the market: the Chicken and the Ducke are fatned for the market, and many a Goslin never lives to be a Goose.

It is the moneth wherein Nature hath her full of mirth, and the Senses are filled with delights. I conclude, It is from the Heavens a Grace, and to the Earth a Gladnesse.

Farewell.

J U N E

IT IS NOW JUNE, and the Hay-makers are mustered to make an army for the field, where not always in order, they march under the Bagge and the Bottle, when betwixt the Forke and the Rake, there is seene great force of armes: Now doth the broad Oke comfort the weary Laborer, while under his shady Boughes he sits singing to his bread and cheese: the Hay-cocke is the Poore mans Lodging, and the fresh River is his gracious Neighbour: Now the Faulcon and the Tassell try their wings at the Partridge, and the fat Bucke fils the great pasty: the trees are all in their rich aray: but the seely Sheep is turned out of his coat: the Roses & sweet Herbes put the Distiller to his cunning, while the green

apples on the tree are ready for the great bellied wives: Now begins the Hare to gather up her heeles, and the Foxe lookes about him, for feare of the Hound: the Hooke and the Sickle are making ready for the harvest: the Medow grounds gape for raine, and the Corne in the eare begins to harden: the little Lads make Pipes of the straw, and they that cannot dance, will yet bee hopping: the Ayre now groweth somewhat warme, the coole winds are very comfortable: the Sayler now makes merry passage, and the nimble Foot-man runnes with pleasure: In briefe, I thus conclude, I hold it a sweet season, the sen-ses perfume, and the spirits comfort.

Farewell.

IT IS NOW JULY, and the Sunne is gotten up to his height, whose heat parcheth the earth, and burnes up the grasse on the mountaines. Now begins the Canon of heaven to rattle, & when the fire is put to the charge it breaketh out among the Cloudes: the stones of congealed water cut off the eares of the Corne: and the blacke stormes affright the faint-hearted: the Stag and the Bucke are now in the pride of their time, and the hardnesse of their heads makes them fit for the Horner: Now hath the Sparhawke the Partridge in the foot, and the Ferret doth tickle the Cony in the borough. Now doeth the Farmer make ready his teame, and the Carter with his whip, hath no small pride in

his Whistle. Now doe the Reapers try their backs and their Armes, and the lusty Youthes pitch the sheafes into the Cart: The old Partridge calles her Covey in the morning, and in the evening, the Shepheard fals to folding of his flocke: the Sparrowes make a charme upon the greene Bushes, till the Fowler come and take them by the dozens: the Smelt now begins to be in season, and the Lamprey out of the River leapes into a Pye: the Souldier now hath a hot march, and the Lawyer sweats in his lyned Gowne: The Pedler now makes a long walke, and the Aqua vitae Bottle sets his face on a fiery heat: In summe, I thus conclude of it,

I hold it a profitable season, the
Labourers gaine, and
the rich mans
wealth.

Farewell.

A U G U S T

IT IS NOW AUGUST, and the Sunne is somewhat towards his declination, yet such is his heat as hardeneth the soft clay, dries up the standing ponds, wytheretheth the sappy leaves, and scorcheth the skin of the naked: now beginne the Gleaners to follow the Corne Cart, and a little bread to a great deale of drinke makes the Travailers dinner: the Melowne and the Cucumber is now in request: and Oyle and vineger give attendance on the Sallet hearbes: the Alehouse is more frequented than the Taverne, and a fresh River is more comfortable than a fiery Furnace: the Bathe is now much visited by diseased bodies, and in the fayre Rivers, swimming is a sweet exercise: the Bow and the

Bowle picke many a purse, and the Cockes with their heeles spurne away many a mans wealth: The Pipe and the Taber is now lustily set on worke, and the Lad and the Lasse will have no lead on their heeles: the new Wheat makes the Gossips Cake, and the Bride Cup is caried above the heads of the whole Parish: the Furmenty pot welcomes home the Harvest cart, and the Garland of Flowers crownes the Captaine of the Reapers. Oh, 'tis the merry time, wherein honest Neighbours make good cheere, and God is glorified in his blessings on the earth. In summe, for that I find, I thus conclude, I hold it the worlds welfare, and the earths Warming-pan.

Farewell.

S E P T E M B E R

IT IS NOW SEPTEMBER, and the Sunne begins to fall much from his height, the medowes are left bare, by the mouthes of hungry Cattell, and the Hogges are turned into the Corne fields: the windes begin to knock the Apples heads together on the trees, and the fallings are gathered to fill the Pyes for the Houshold: the Say-lers fall to worke to get afore the winde, and if they spy a storme, it puts them to prayer: the Souldier now begins to shrug at the weather, and the Campe dissolv-ed, the Companies are put to Garison: the Lawyer now begins his Harvest, and the Client payes for words by waight: the Innes now begin to provide for ghests, and the night-eaters in the stable pinch the Travailer in

his bed: Paper, pen, and inke are much in request, and the quarter Sessions take order with the way-layers: Coales and wood make toward the Chimney, and Ale and Sacke are in account with good fellows: the Butcher now knocks down the great Beeves, and the Poulters feathers make toward the Upholster: Walflet Oysters are the Fishwives wealth, and Pippins fine are the Costermongers rich merchandise: the flayle and the fan fall to worke in the Barne, and the Corne market is full of the Bakers: the Porkets now are driven to the Woods, and the home-fed Pigges make porke for the market. In briefe, I thus conclude of it,
I hold it the Winters forewarning,
and the Summers farewell.

Adieu.

OCTOBER

IT IS NOW OCTOBER, and the lofty windes make bare the trees of their leaves, while the hogs in the Woods grow fat with the falne Acorns: the forward Deere begin to goe to rut, and the barren Doe groweth good meat: the Basket-makers now gather their rods, and the fishers laye their leapes in the deepe: the loade horses goe apace to the Mill, and the Meal-market is seldome without people: the Hare on the hill makes the Greyhound a faire course, & the Foxe in the woods cals the Hounds to a full cry: the multitude of people raiseth the price of wares, and the smoothe tongue will sell much: the Saylor now bestirreth his stumps, while the Merchant liveth in feare of the weather: the great

feasts are now at hand for the City, but the poore must not beg for feare of the stockes: a fire and a paire of Cards keepe the ghests in the Ordinary, and Tobacco is held very precious for the Rhewme: The Coaches now begin to rattle in the street: but the cry of the poore is unpleasing to the rich: Muffes and Cuffes are now in request, and the shuttel-Cocke with the Battel-doore is a pretty house-exercise: Tennis and Baloune are sports of some charge, and a quicke bandy is the Court-keepers commodity: dancing and fencing are now in some use, and kind hearts and true Lovers lye close, to keepe off cold: the Titmouse now keepes in the hollow tree, and the black bird sits close in the bottome of a hedge: In briefe, for the little pleasure I find in it, I thus conclude of it: I hold it a Messenger of ill newes, and a second service to a bad dinner.

Farewell.

NOVEMBER

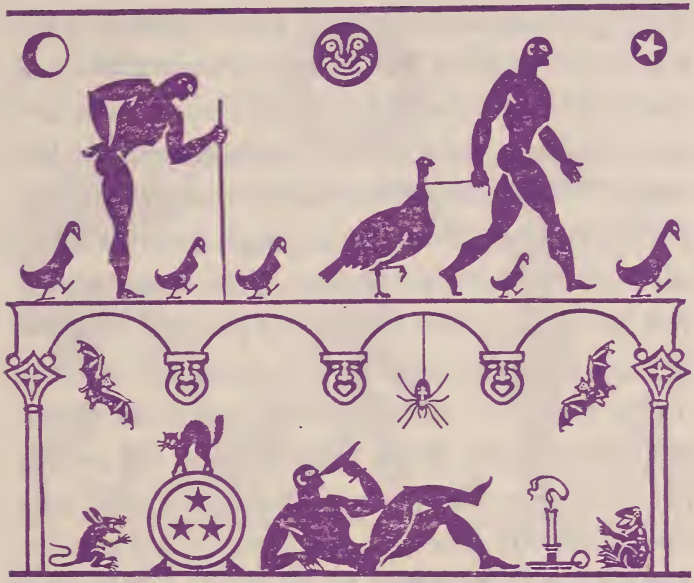
IT IS NOW NOVEMBER, and according to the old Proverbe, Let the Thresher take his flayle, and the ship no more sayle: for the high winds and the rough seas will try the ribs of the Shippe, and the hearts of the Sailers: Now come the Countrey people all wet to the Market, and the toyling Carriers are pittifully moyled: The young Herne and the Shoulerd are now fat for the great Feast, and the Woodcocke begins to make toward the Cockeshoot: the Warriners now begin to plie their harvest, and the Butcher, after a good bargaine, drinks a health to the Grasier: the Cooke and the Comfitmaker make ready for Christmas, and the Minstrels in the Countrey beat their boyes for false fingring: Schollers

before breakefast have a cold stomacke to their bookes, and a Master without Art is fit for an A.B.C. A red herring and a cup of Sacke, make warre in a weake stomacke, and the poore mans fast is better then the Gluttons surfet: Trenchers and dishes are now necessary servants and a locke to the Cupboord keepes a bit for a neede: Now beginnes the Goshauke to weede the wood of the Phesant, and the Mallard loves not to heare the belles of the Faulcon: The Winds now are cold, and the Ayre chill, and the poore die through want of Charitie: Butter and Cheese beginne to rayse their prices, and Kitchen stuffe is a commoditie, that every man is not acquainted with. In summe, with a conceit of the chilling cold of it, I thus conclude in it:

I hold it the discomfort of Nature,
and Reasons patience.

Farewell.

D E C E M B E R



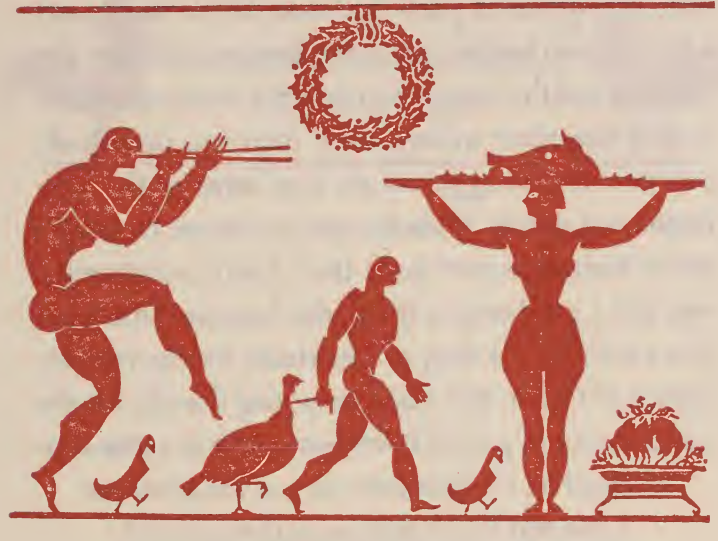
IT IS NOW DECEMBER, and hee that walkes the streets, shall find durt on his shooes, except hee goe all in bootes: Now doth the Lawyer make an end of his harvest, and the Client of his purse: Now Capons and Hennes, besides Turkies, Geese and Duckes, besides Beefe and Mutton must all die for the great feast, for in twelve days a multitude of people will not bee fed with a little: Now plummes and spice, Sugar and Honey, square it among pies and broth, and Gossip I drinke to you, and you are welcome, and I thanke you, and how doe you, and I pray you bee merrie: Now are the Taylors and the Tiremakers full of worke against the Holi-

dayes and Musicke now must bee in tune or else never: the youth must dance and sing, and the aged sit by the fire. It is the Law of Nature, and no Contradiction in reason: The Asse that hath borne all the year, must now take a little rest, and the leane Oxe must feed until hee bee fat: The Footman now shall have many a foule step and the Ostler shall have work enough about the heeles of the Horses, while the Tapster, if hee take not heed, will lie drunke in the Seller: The prices of meat will rise apace, and the apparell of the proud will make the Taylor rich: Dice and Cardes will benefit the Butler: And if the Cooke do not lacke wit, hee will sweetly lick his fingers: Starchers and Launderers will have their hands full of worke, and Periwigs and painting will not bee a little set by, strange stuffes will bee well sold, strange tales well told, strange sights much sought, strange things much bought, and what else as fals out.

To conclude, I hold it the costly Purveyour of Excesse, and the after breeder of ne/ cessitie, the practice of Folly, and the Purgatory of Reason.

Farewell.

CHRISTMAS DAY



IT IS NOW CHRISTMAS, and not a Cup of drinke must passe without a Caroll, the Beasts, Fowle and Fish come to a generall execution, and the Corne is ground to dust for the Bakehouse, and the Pastry: Cards and Dice purge many a purse, and the Youth shew their agility in shooing of the wild Mare: now good cheere and welcome, and God be with you, and I thanke you: and against the new year, provide for the presents: the Lord of Mis-rule is no meane man for his time, and the ghests of the high Table must lacke no Wine: the lusty bloods must looke about them like men, and piping and dauncing puts away much melancholy: stolne Venison is sweet, and a fat Coney is worth money: Pit-falles are

now set for small Birdes, and a Woodcocke hangs himselfe in a gynne: a good fire heats all the house, and a full Almes-basket makes the Beggers Prayers: the Maskers and the Mummers make the merry sport: but if they lose their money, their Drumme goes dead: Swearers and Swaggerers are sent away to the Alehouse, and unruly Wenches goe in danger of Judgement: Musicians now make their Instruments speake out, and a good song is worth the hearing. In summe it is a holy time, a duty in Christians, for the remembrance of Christ, and custome among friends, for the maintenance of good fellowship: In briefe, I thus conclude of it: I hold it a memory of the Heavens Love, and the worlds peace, the myrth of the honest, and the meeting of the friendly.

Farewell.

A PROGNOSTICATION 1951—1979

JANUARY

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D E C E M B E R

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Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	1951 · 1956 1962 · 1973
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Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	1961 · 1967 1972 · 1978

GLOSSARY

From the Golden Cockerel Press edition, with the permission of Robert Gibbings and Christopher Sandford.

JAN. Northerne black Dust : coal-dust.
during : enduring.
Coney, connies : rabbits.
ordinary : a meal.
Muscouia commodities : Russian wares.
shoulder of a hog is a shooing-horn : salt bacon helps down good drink.

FEB. Makes : mates.
Terme travellers : scholars, or 'the poore man that commeth to the Terme to trie his right' at law.
Chaundlers cheese makes the chalk walke apace: salted cheese runs up the scores chalked up against customers on the back of the ale-house door.
foot-cloth : horse-cloth.

MAR. Mew : cage.
charme : blended singing.

APR. Cosset Lamb : lamb reared by hand.
Sheepes eyes in Lambs heads : maidens' wanton glances.

MAY pagged (?pagled) : big with young.

JUNE Tassel : faulcon with tassels and bells.
seely : silly, harmless.

JULY Horner : horn merchant.

AUG. Bowe and the Bowle, &c : archery, bowles and cock-fighting multiply betting.
Furmenty : frumenty, hulled wheat boiled in milk and seasoned.

SEPT. Poulters : poulterers.

OCT. leapes : baskets to keep or catch fish in.
Ordinary : tavern.

NOV. Herne : heron.
Shoulerd : shoveller duck.
Cockeshoot : glade with nets stretched across to catch game.
Warriners : rabbit catchers.

DEC. Tiremakers : head-dress makers.

One thousand copies of this book have been made, of which one hundred have been bound in leather and signed by Bruce Rogers, who composed the text and executed the designs. It has been printed on English handmade rag paper at the Thistle Press in New York by W. Irving Senne, Lamar C. Andrews and William T. Fernald. The binding was done by Frank Fortney and completed in February, 1951.

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